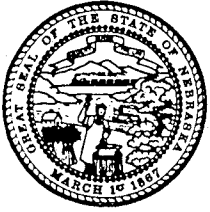


STATE OF NEBRASKA



Mike Johanns
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Roger K. Patterson
Director

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Regional Listening Session, Corps of Engineers, July 18, 2000, Omaha, NE

Comments from the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources:

1. The biases need to be removed from program guidelines and benefit/cost analyses in order to allow non-structural alternative to move forward on their own merit. Calculating the benefits of non-structural projects in the same way as structural projects to include avoided damage, as an additional benefit would be in order. In addition, land and easements should be considered part of the total cost, not just a local sponsor requirement. We would further encourage the Corps of Engineers to lead an effort to amend the Principles and Guidelines as they relate to environmental benefits. It is very difficult to understand the rationale of the current procedure.
2. We fully appreciate the technical assistance programs like the Corps of Engineers' Flood Plain Management Services and the Planning Assistance to States Program. Reliable annual funding is needed for these programs as they have the most promise for a long-term impact. We would encourage rearranging priorities to assure a very positive and aggressive Floodplain Management Services Program.
3. We appreciate the effort the Corps of Engineers has put forth to develop a new Master Manual for the Missouri River and the early coordination with states and Indian Tribes. Seven out of the eight states reached an agreement with the Corps through a negotiated process, however, we must state our dissatisfaction with the 11th hour approach the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has used to attempt to dictate a final program to the Corps, the Tribes and the States, while leaving the effort at a standstill. An adaptive management approach needs to be utilized to assure a realistic and practical solution.
4. Nebraska will strongly support continuation of the present cost-sharing ratio outlined in past Water Resources Development Acts. The possibility (as discussed recently) of a 50-50 cost-share rate will present a tremendous hardship on the state as well as local sponsors and the entire program will suffer.
5. Nebraska is very similar to other states, we must constantly remind Federal agencies of state water rights. We have had recent dealings with Corps officials in relation to the Harlan County Dam wherein it appeared state water rights were being overlooked. We ask you carefully evaluate any action that must be taken when state water rights are involved.